RESTORATION REVIEW

Leroy Garrett, Editor

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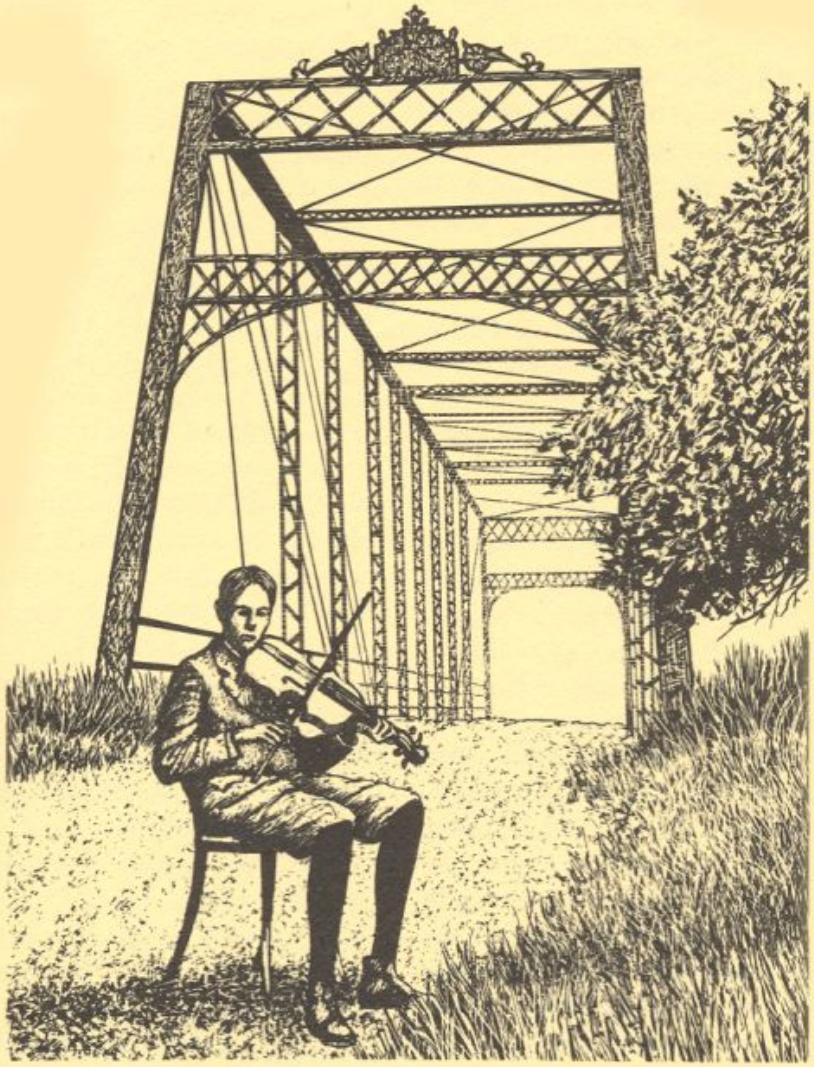

Fiddler at the Bridge

Beckoning us all to an uncertain future as our nation moves into its third century. But for the believer there is complete assurance in God's tomorrow, whether nations prosper or fail, rise or fall. And so the future is ours.

Volume 18, No. 10 **Leroy Garrett, Editor** **December 1976**

The Word Abused . . .

SOME OF THE LEFT OVER PASSAGES

The series has now gone through twenty installments. Still we did not get through. Counting the suggestions that came in from our readers, we could easily make this series a regular feature for years to come. But there is no need to overdo a bad thing, so commencing with the new year we will be moving in other directions. In closing out, however, we thought it appropriate to share with you some of the left overs. This will be little more than a bare reference to a number of abused scriptures, but this may prove sufficient to call your attention to them so that you can take up where we leave off, untwisting them and disabusing them as you may.

One of those tucked away in my folder in dire need of attention is Rom. 7:16, where "form of doctrine" is made to refer to the steps of salvation, and "obeyed from the heart" is used to teach that a certain level of understanding, especially of baptism for the remission of sins, is necessary. That's about as much abuse as anyone could expect from a single line of scripture: "You have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you." The first part of the line shows that the readers had made a sincere response to the gospel, while the second part points to their obedience to "the principles of the Christian gospel," to use McGarvey's description. Phillips' rendition is helpful: "You honestly responded to the impact of Christ's teaching when you came under its influence." Schonfield translates it "that model of teaching," and supplies a footnote to the effect that Paul may refer to a manual of instruction that then circulated. To make "form" refer to faith, repentance and baptism *per se* and "from the heart" mean a knowledge of the import of baptism is to overwork and abuse a passage. That has to be imposed upon it, not drawn from what is actually said.

I also wanted to show that the case of Nadab and Abihu has come in for some gross maltreatment, for it is used to prove that our family in the Christian Churches, like those two priests, "offer up strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not," when they use instrumental music. I believe one can be non-instrumental music with good cause without resorting to such gymnastics as that. The priests were in obvious rebellion to what was clearly set forth as their responsibility, which was that the fire for offerings was to be taken from the brazen altar in the outer court (Lev. 6:8-13). They "presented before the Lord illicit fire which he had not commanded," which means they used fire from a different source, in defiance of what God had specified. This is made to suggest that

instrumental music is “a strange fire which he commanded not.” The parallel that is claimed here simply will not hold up. It assumes that a certain “kind” of music is authorized which excludes all other kinds, and that God has specifically described that kind, like he did the sacrificial fire. There is no clear-cut reference to congregational singing in scripture, with or without an instrument, like there was for the fire in the temple. If a congregation did not sing at all, it could not be proved that they were doing wrong. The singing called for may well have been private and at home (where most of our folk will allow the instrument!). Besides, all any of us do is to sing, some of us believing we can employ aids and others not. If, when directed to sing spiritual songs, we brayed some nonsense, then a reference to Nadab and Abihu might be in order. This bit about the instrument being “another kind of music” (as if different from what God has specified) is farfetched. And to put our brethren in the same class with Nadab and Abihu because they choose to use an instrument is worse than farfetched.

Also in my file is a tear sheet from one of our papers on *What is truth?* It reminds one of how terribly we have abused this term, applying it, for the most part, to our particular party slant. You are loyal to “the truth” if you are a capella or-amillennial or non-cooperative — or faithful to what the Christian Church or Church of Christ teaches. There are of course many truths in scripture, and we must be faithful to all of them that we understand. Some of these are obviously more important than others. But “the truth” is something else, and I can’t believe that when Jesus said “You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free” that he was referring to all the truths of revelation. He was referring to his own entrance into history and into the lives of his disciples. He and only he is the truth. When one knows that truth, when he knows Jesus, he is free, not until. It doesn’t matter how full his head may be of the many truths of scripture or how faithfully he interprets all the doctrine. If his heart is empty of the truth, which is the Person of Jesus dwelling in our hearts through faith, then all else is vain.

I was hoping to include a lesson on Jesus washing his disciples feet, which is so often abused through sheer neglect of its real significance. We are so eager to show the inapplicability of foot washing for our time that the story is too soon passed by. Our people must be confused by this tack we so often take — “That doesn’t apply to us.” They might start asking about our infallibility or omniscience. How do we know so much as to know just when scripture applies and when it doesn’t? Anyway, I buy the story of Jesus washing feet, and I don’t attempt to explain it away. I only recognize what is obvious, that he is not being crassly literal. We wash feet by helping people and loving them. When Ouida ,and I sit here all day long, wrapping copies of this journal, which is our own little labor of love for your sake, I explain to her that we are washing feet. Some of the responses that we get

would suggest that. And it does such ones a lot more good than if we literally bowed before them with a pan of water. But, if and when appropriate, we shall both be pleased to do that too, for your sake and for Jesus' sake. When Jesus says, "You also ought to wash one another's feet," I accept it in humble obedience. But I can see from life's experiences that its fullfillment is in many ways beyond the literal.

And I would have preferred to have done at least a short piece on "discerning the Body," as referred to in 1 Cor. 11:29. You notice I capitalized Body, as does the New English, which means that I recognize it as referring to Christ's body, the church, though I am not suggesting that it must always be so capitalized. But in this passage it differentiates it from the loaf that has been referred to. Paul is not saying that we should keep our minds on the Supper and thus "discern the body," which I think is to abuse the text. Otherwise "he eats and drinks damnation to himself." Surely this doesn't happen to one when he lets his mind wander and he thinks for a moment about how he's going to make the next rent payment when his mind should be upon the meaning of the Supper. That may be weak and sinful, but that is not what Paul is talking about. The phrase "not discerning the Body" is the careless failure to see the unity of those in Christ and to be content to break bread in an atmosphere of strife and division. And one does drink damnation to himself when his behavior as a factionist stands in judgement against him as he shares in a feast that in its very essence is an expression of the oneness that is in Christ. That makes it a powerful passage, and one that should cause us to stop and think about our divisive ways. When we push from us a brother or sister for whom Christ died because he has veered from our party line or because of the color of his skin, and then sit down to partake of the Supper — "not discerning the Body" — we may be in very serious trouble with the Lord.

"In my Father's house are many mansions" is a passage that we may be missing by a country mile, but I will only raise the question without attempting to give a full answer, for I am not sure I know. But I question that this is really the funeral message that we make of it. In scripture God's house is His church, not heaven. The mansions may be the sanctuaries of human hearts, not some kind of apartments in another world. Besides, heaven may eventually be right here on earth! We know, at least, that there will be a new earth for the righteous. If we judge by the context of John 14, Jesus is talking about the Spirit, not heaven. He was offering the disciples immediate assurance and comfort, so that their hearts need not be troubled. He wasn't preaching their funerals!

This comfort would come from what he was going away to prepare, what he went on to talk about, the coming of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit dwells in each mansion of the heart. The "place" he prepares is life in the Spirit, which is life with him. This interpretation has its difficulties, bu t I think the "orthodox" interpretation has even more. You think about it.

I wanted to do a piece on "Going down front," which is now so common in our congregations. One may wonder where we ever got such an idea, if not from the old mourner's bench. What is going on anyway when a brother or sister walks down the aisle, gives a hand to the preacher, and then proceeds to go through a rather well defined procedure? More often than not this is for the confession of sins and contrition, which makes it very similar to the Roman Catholic confessional. We've all seen those cubicles when visiting a Roman Church, called confessionals, and we are usually critical of such a practice. The idea of confessing one's sins to a priest! Why is it all that different when the confession is before several hundred priests? What has happened to the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers? When we sin, we should go to God through our Advocate, Jesus Christ. Why go before a congregation any more than before a priest? I am suspicious that this is a control device invented by our clergy. I was reminded of this recently when one brother, poking fun at the antics of another, said, "Man, acting like that, you're going to have to go down front!" Going down front, or the threat of it, is our way of keeping folk in line. I hear from time to time of how brethren, in hot water with their congregations, offer to "go down front," if that will help any. What a mess we have gotten ourselves into in so many ways, this meaningless practice not being the least. It could well serve to displace the real meaning of priesthood and thus do a lot of harm.

I think we abuse the story of Jesus by giving too little attention to the context in which he lived. We abuse the story by modernizing Jesus, conveniently neglecting his Jewishness. We make him white (which I suppose he was, but an Easterner nonetheless and hardly like a modern American or Britisher) and middle class. And he was a Jew! But we make a Gentile out of him, and we kid ourselves into supposing that he would fit right into most any of our congregations should he again walk the earth. It is more like one of my Harvard profs said when I ask him what he thought would happen to Jesus if he should again appear among us. "He would be killed or imprisoned," he said, When I asked him who would do it, he said it would be the clergy and the churches, just as before. But we don't think our churches would do anything like that, do we? It is just possible that the greatest abuse of scripture of all is to make our way meticulously through the Bible and completely miss Jesus.

On and on it could go. My readers sent in a number of suggestions that we never got to, such as the use we make of the term evangelist and the way we interpret the prophetic cry “They shall be called by a new name.” What we make heresy to mean and the slant we give to “marry only in the Lord” are also suspect.

People who love the Bible will not intentionally twist and abuse it. We hope that this series has alerted us to some of the dangers we face as we handle the most sacred trust ever vouchsafed to human hands. No surgeon has cause to be any more careful. There is good reason why the scriptures themselves would warn “Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, for you know that we who teach shall be judged with greater strictness” (Jas. 3:1). —*the Editor*

That God has a people scattered among these various organizations and ecclesiasticisms we are happy in believing, and we are desirous to see and rejoice in all that is good and Christian among them. — Isaac Errett, *Millennial Harbinger,* 1861, p. 317.

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Bicentennial Notes on Restoration History . . .

THE MEANING OF THAT 1906 CENSUS

It is generally known among our people that the Churches of Christ were listed as a separate religious entity in this country for the first time in the census of 1906. Up until then the Restoration Movement was still undivided, insofar as the census officials were concerned. In previous censuses we were numbered with the people who were variously known as Christian Churches, Disciples of Christ, and Churches of Christ.

We all know that divisions of this magnitude do not occur in anyone year, or even in a decade for that matter. It is something like a divorce granted by the court. The writ may be issued long after the marriage has failed. The 1906 census serves as a convenient outside date for the separate status of Churches of Christ. For a people who suppose themselves to be the only true church, restored to its pristine purity by Alexander Campbell, it is hardly in order to speak of *any* date for its beginning besides 33 A.D. — and no other place beside Jerusalem!

There's a man in Dallas with an odd hobby, who is *not* a member of the Church of Christ. He collects cornerstones marked: *Church of Christ, Founded 33 A.D.*

This singular claim aside for the moment, the historian still has the task of dating the emergence of Churches of Christ in this modern age. We certainly did not exist in the days of Martin Luther. And a good case can be made for our not existing during the lifetime of Alexander Campbell. As a historian of the Movement, I would have to say that the distinctive group known as Churches of Christ began to emerge in the 1880's and that they were a people all their own well before 1906.

Shortly after the Civil War, and just a month following Alexander Campbell's death, Moses E. Lard wrote in his *Quarterly* to the effect that the Restoration Movement would never divide. Now that it had endured that awful turmoil, nothing could divide it, he was convinced. Our leaders were still talking that way in 1883. Hear this voice from the south: "We have never seen a circumstance in which we were willing to advise division in a church of Christ. Our friends have frequently, when evils have entered a church, blamed us for not advising division, withdrawal from a church, etc. They have chided us with cowardice in action — we plead this. We are too cowardly to advise a step in religion never advised by the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God, so far as we have learned, never saw a church of God so corrupted as to advise withdrawal from it."

That is from David Lipscomb, editor of the *Gospel Advocate* (Vol. 24, p. 46), whose language is forthright, and it is consistent with the ideals laid down by the pioneers. By the 1880's some gnawing differences existed within the Movement. These had to do with agencies and societies, instrumental music, reimmersion, the pastor system, cooperation with "the denominations," liberal theology, and even open membership which was then but on the horizon. Lipscomb's views were conservative, though moderate. He opposed instrumental music, which was then in no more than a dozen churches even though hotly debated, but he refused to make it a test of fellowship. He did not draw the line on "pro organ" preachers nor try to keep them out of southern pulpits, as did some of his colleagues on the *Advocate* staff. A good case can be made for the claim that it was Lipscomb's influence that kept the Movement from dividing for two full decades, despite efforts on the part of others to divide it.

But there is some evidence that he saw division as inevitable as early as 1883, for he wrote: "If a separation will, and ought to come, it may be asked, 'How will it be brought about?' All the true disciple has to do is to firmly stand for the truth, and be true to it. God, in his providence will then bring it."

That same year (1883) up in Cincinnati John F. Rowe, editor of the *Christian Leader,* called for the drawing of lines. "The day for dilly-dallying has passed," he insisted, "We want to know the men upon whom we can depend. Let our men of faith and integrity be in frequent consultation." He wanted some concerted action to be taken against the innovators. Isaac Errett called this a conspiracy to "capture as many of our churches and preachers as possible with a view to a separation." But Rowe was not able to pull it off, mainly because he got no encouragement from David Lipscomb in the south.

A few years later Daniel Sommer proved to be more successful. Once he assumed the mantle of conservative leadership in the north from Benjamin Franklin and began to edit his own *Octographic Review* in Indianapolis, he embarked upon a plan to bring the innovators to account. He arranged for a mass meeting of the faithful in Sand, Creek, Illinois (Aug. 18, 1889), which attracted 6,000. He worked up a document called "An Address and Declaration," which was in obvious reference to Thomas Campbell's famous "Declaration and Address." Once Sommer had addressed the assembly on the evils of the innovations, Peter P. Warren read the document, which was a threat to withdraw from all those who did not change their ways: "And now we are impelled from a sense of duty to say that all such as are guilty of teaching or allowing and practicing the many innovations and corruptions to which we have referred, after having had sufficient time for meditation and reflection, if they do not turn away from their abominations that we cannot and will not regard them as brethren." The innovations named were choirs, instrumental music, man-made societies for missionary work, and the one-man imported preacher-pastor.

We cannot and will not regard them as brethren. This was so different from the spirit of Campbell and Stone, who had insisted that varying opinions may be allowed on the non-essentials. So this document was a reverse of the "Declaration and Address" in both name and practice. It drew strong fire from the *Christian Standard,* which called it "Sommerism and Sand Creekism" and said it was against all that Campbell, Stone, Scott, Errett and Franklin stood for. It called upon Lipscomb to let it be known that he has no sympathy with it. But this time Lipscomb raised no voice of protest. Now he was sympathetic, though it was hardly the thing he himself would have done. The die was now cast. It would be only with Lipscomb's blessings in the south that the conservative Churches of Christ could become separate. He still talked about patience and forbearance, but he at last consented to what he said he would never do. So, August 18, 1889 makes a suitable date for the beginning of the Churches of Christ as a separate religious group. But that will be too much for some of our brethren, especially when we allow Sand Creek, Illinois to displace Jerusalem as the birthplace. One can always argue that the Churches of Christ are

the true Restoration Movement, that the liberals departed from the faith, and that through Campbell's efforts we are the true, restored church of the New Testament, which takes us back once more to 33 A.D. and Jerusalem.

An interesting thing about this story is that it doesn't all take place in the south as it is suppose to, if the Civil War is the real culprit, as some of our historians have insisted. It was a sectional thing, they say, born of the animosities and socio-economic conditions emanating from the War. We *had* to divide over something, they insist, the north-south prejudices being what they were. This is social determinism that accounts for our divisions on the basis of cultural forces rather than on the ground of our sinfulness. If Jesus prayed for our oneness and if the apostles enjoined it upon us, then we must conclude that it is possible to "preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," and let cultural forces be hanged. If it can all be blamed on the Civil War, then there is nothing to worry about, for it couldn't be helped. I am not a social determinist, and I do not agree with this thesis.

This story of our first division was trans-sectional and not southern. That most Churches of Christ turn out to be in the south does not mean that this fracture was a split between those who were on opposite sides during the war. Those who so interpret our history are neglecting some important facts.

1. The Civil War ended in 1865. Twenty years later both David Lipscomb in the south and Isaac Errett in the north, the leading editors of the Movement, were pleading for a united people and warning against division. The War *was* the cause of the Baptists, Presbyterians, and Methodists dividing, and at this time they had long been divided. If the War divided us, why was it so long doing its dirty work?

2. The legalism or exclusivism that finally separated the Churches of Christ at least by 1906 was not necessarily southern in origin. As we have seen, the efforts of John Rowe and Daniel Sommer to separate "the faithful" from the rest was in Ohio and Illinois, not in the south.

3. The strongest voice in the south into the 1890's, that of David Lipscomb, was the voice of moderation. He was by no means a radical exclusivist. He even urged unity with the Baptists! For a long time he insisted that the Movement must not divide, and he was on record for declaring he could conceive of no circumstance that he would divide it, certainly not over societies and the instrument. Much of the pressure that finally caused him to surrender this position came from the north.

4. The schisms that finally led to an open split pitted northerner against northerner and southerner against southerner rather than being sectional. It was Isaac Errett of the *Standard* opposing the radicalism of John Rowe of the *Leader*, both northerners. It was Lipscomb opposing the radicalism of Austin McGary of the *Firm Foundation*, both southerners.

5. To say that the liberals were in the north and the conservatives in the south will not do either. J. W. McGarvey, hardly a southerner, was the most learned conservative of them all, leading in the fight against liberal religion. He was non-instrument but pro-society, and he never separated from the Disciples (though he did leave a congregation when the organ was introduced), believing that fellowship allows for differences. Franklin, Rowe, and Sommer were radically conservative, and all were northerners. Too, not all the conservatives "left" with the Churches of Christ. Like McGarvey, many remained for decades to come. The second major division was that of the conservative Christian Churches (instrumentalists) leaving the Disciples, which was almost compeltely northern, and began in the 1920's. Still today the conservative Christian Church is at its strongest in the midwest, not in the south. The liberal Disciples, on the other hand, are relatively strong in the south.

6. Even among Churches of Christ (non-instrument) some of the most radical exclusivists, such as the Sommer churches, were in the north, people who had virtually no contact at all with the south.

So this division in 1906 was hardly a north-south thing. Certainly the War and the economy applied pressures, but the real culprit was "the true church" fallacy. Our people could have followed the attitude of J. W. McGarvey, which would have resulted in our having some pro-organ and pro-society churches and some opposed, but still in fellowship and still recognizing each other as brothers. It was when some leliders rose up and said, "You have to believe and practice as we do or we will not recognize you as brothers," that we began to divide. This is exclusivism, which is still the spirit of most Churches of Christ, north or south. Exclusivism by its very nature is divisive. It has subdivided the Churches of Christ into still other sects, perhaps as many as 12 or 15 who claim to be the only true New Testament church. This is the tragedy of our history. It did not have to be, Civil War or no Civil War.

This can be rather easily corrected if we will cease being exclusivists. No one need surrender any truth he holds or make any compromise with what is clearly set forth in scripture. It is a matter of ceasing to make our opinions and private interpretations tests of fellowship. We can believe we are right without believing everyone else to be wrong.

Up in Washington in 1906, S.N.D. North, the Census Bureau director, was confused with the data he had on Christian Churches, Churches of Christ, and Disciples of Christ. So he wrote to David Lipscomb, wanting to know if Churches of Christ should be considered as separate. Uncle Dave was ready for him, for already he had prepared a list of "faithful" churches and preachers. After presenting a brief summary of the Movement's history, he told Mr. North that "There is a distinct people taking the Word of God as their only and sufficient rule of faith, calling their churches 'churches of Christ,' or 'churches of God,' distinct and separate in name, work and rule of faith from all other bodies or people."

The Disciples recognized the cleavage in their 1911 *Yearbook.* The deed was done. Our people had learned something new, to settle their differences by dividing. We apparently learned it well. —*the Editor*

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The Glory of an Imperfect Effort . . .

JOHN RUSKIN AND THE DOCTRINE OF IMPERFECTION

By Thomas Langford

In the second volume of John Ruskin's *Stones of Venice,* published in 1853, there is a chapter entitled "On The Nature of Gothic" which contains one of the most interesting studies of art and human nature to come out of the 19th century. Because its truths are so important, and because Ruskin reinforces so well from a secular viewpoint what the apostle Paul wrote about the spiritual architecture of the church, we need to review the essay.

Ruskin made a distinction between Greek, Assyrian and Egyptian art on the one hand, and Christian art on the other. In the non-Christian cultures there was a concern for the craftsmanship of ordinary workmen in the ornamentation of public building. The Greek artist could not tolerate imperfection in any form so he gave to the workmen only that part of the architectural production which they could execute by following mere geometricai

forms. The Assyrian and Egyptian, not so concerned for perfection of form, simply lowered the standard to a level which every workman could reach. In Ruskin's words,

> The Greek gave to the lower workman no subject which he could not perfectly execute. The Assyrian gave him subjects which he could only execute imperfectly, but fixed a legal standard for his imperfection. The workman was, in both systems, a slave.

Ruskin then turns to Christian art (of the Middle Ages) and demonstrates the vast difference of approach, an approach which not only tolerated imperfection, but saw in it something entirely worthwhile.

> Christianity recognized, in small things as well as great, the individual value of the human soul. But it not only recognizes its value, it confesses its imperfection . . . That admission of lost power and fallen nature, which the Greek or Ninevite felt to be intensely painful, and, so far as might be, altogether refused, the Christian makes daily and hourly, contemplating the fact of it without fear, as tending, in the end, to God's greater glory. Therefore, to every spirit which Christianity summons to her service, her exhortation is: Do what you can and confess frankly what you are unable to do; neither let your effort be shortened for fear of failu re, nor your confession silenced for fear of shame.

Ruskin has captured here in terms of art what the sacred scripture has taught us about the church. The apostle Peter writes that the saints are "like living stones … built into a spiritual house" (1 Peter 2:5). And Paul writes of "the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:1 5). Further, he says that we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love" (Eph. 4:15-16). The task of all parts of the church is to contribute regularly and systematically to the edification, the building up, of the spiritual temple. Sometimes the scripture uses the figure of the body, sometimes the temple, sometimes the family, but always the emphasis is on the contribution which each individual, however imperfect, should make to the overall and all pervading purpose of spiritual construction.

Our age, like the Greeks and Ninevites, has become enslaved to the desire for perfection (or what passes for it). Consequently, we continually sacrifice the constructive contributions of God's ordained individual workmen for the superficial gloss and

perfection of professionals. Instead of the active, interested involvement of all Christians in mutual edification of the church, we seem to wish only the polished, the smooth and soothing work of one who was especially trained as a professional teacher. Our preachers must make the good impression, not speak too long or ever use less than the best of grammar. Whether they actually edify doesn't seem to matter so much as that their statements acceptable to received opinion. The common farmer, or carpenter, or student may never be encouraged to contribute to the edification of the saints. Such persons are always needed, as an audience for the professional, and as financial contributors to sustain the hired "feeder" of the flock, but their own talents and insights must be held to themselves because the pulpit is already occupied.

Of course this is not the picture we get from First Corinthians 12 or Ephesians 4, where Paul insists that every member has his part to play in building up of the body. He teaches that we may not despise the member who seems rough and unpolished if he has a message to share.

> On the contrary, the parts of the body' which seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those parts of the body which we think less honorable we invest with the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior part, that there may be no discord in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. (1 Cor. 12:22-27)

The point is to seek the perfection of the whole body through the working of every part. And roughness, awkwardness, imperfections, are not to be avoided like the plague, but accepted and recognized as a natural result of our fallen state, even when we appropriately strive for the perfection of our calling. Let no man give less than his best, but let no one be despised when his best is imperfect.

Ruskin clearly recognized our human shortsightedness in mistaking superficial flawlessness for the more difficult perfection of God's standard.

> The modern English mind has this much in common with that of the Greek, that it intensely desires, in all things, the utmost completion or perfection compatible with their nature. This is a noble character in the

> abstract, but becomes ignoble when it causes us to forget the relative dignities of that nature itself, and to prefer the perfectness of the lower nature to the imperfection of the higher.

Such an idea paradoxically advocates the acceptance of imperfection while holding the goal of perfection. But isn't this clearly the nature of the Christian's way — to be always seeking perfection but recognizing that whereever one's best still results in imperfection, the very failure to reach the perfect goal "tends, in the end, to God's greater glory?" As another Victorian put it, "A man's reach should exceed his grasp/Or what's a heaven for?" (Browning, Andrea del Sarto). God knew full well our fallen state, "tempered the body together" because of it, and expected that we make the most of imperfection, even while seeking the perfect.

The doctrine of imperfection does not encourage failure, but a recognition that effort in noble purpose is better than doing nothing for fear of error. The imperfection which merely reflects the finitude of man may also reflect the illimitable nature of God, if that imperfection falls on the way to a heavenly goal. Who mocks the child when his drawing fails to mirror the flower in all its complex beauty? That he wanted to reflect that beauty, that he attempted so noble a goal, is worthy of praise. That the drawing is imperfect tells us something of the perfection of the flower, as well as of the limitations of the artist.

> To banish imperfection is to destroy expression, to check exertion, to paralyze vitality. All things are literally better, lovelier, and more beloved for the imperfections which have been divinely appointed, that the law of human life may be Effort and the law of human judgment, Mercy.

Ruskin's doctrine of imperfection (he never called it that) became a major force in Victorian thought, contributing to a greater appreciation for democracy, for the common man, and for the achievement of the individual. The poet Browning was perhaps the most eloquent spokesman for the theory after Ruskin. His poetry continually exalts the individual who seeks to be everything for which God created him, to "strive and thrive," nothing daunted that his achievement is imperfect or even inferior to that of others. In "Christmas Day," a long poem often neglected by modern readers, Browning (or at least the persona of the poem) is carried away in spirit to observe the reception of the nativity story in three settings: a dissenting English chapel, St. Peter's in Rome, and a skeptic's lecture hall in Germany. After duly considering the three viewpoints, the speaker declares his choice to be the rather grubby, unattractive chapel and its communicants, as best representative of the individual's search after God. It was not that he liked the rather dogmatic preacher of the chapel, or its ignorant and uncultured people; but the enthusiasm

of the worshippers and the directness and simplicity of their worship appealed to him more than the symbolic pomp and splendor of Rome or the dry flamelessness of the rationalist of Germany. Rome seemed to represent the perfection of outward forms, Goettingen the perfection of the intellect and philosophy. But the chapel represented the people, the saints of God, seeking after God with themselves, imperfections and all.

All of this has something to say to us today. In our attempts to build the City of God on earth, we may tend to forget that God's temple is *people*, that God's clergy is *the people*, the people of God seeking after him with all that they are and hope to be. As Peter wrote, You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declared the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9).

This idea reaches out into all areas of the church's life — to its physical buildings, to its corporate praise services, to its teaching, to its evange'Iism, and, most importantly of all, to the daily lives of its individuals. The concept of the universal priesthood of all Christians, the recognition that all the saints should be "ministers," the understanding that no part of one's own ministry can be fulfilled by another — these are Biblical truths which are reflected in the "doctrine of imperfection." And this is not, of course, to put down the eloquent and forceful preacher or teacher. How we all can thrill to the gifts of some men in this direction' Let us not despise, however, him who comes to us with a vital message, however lacking in polish or eloquence. We all enjoy the beauty of the gifted musician, but how many Christians have been driven to neglect the glory of singing the praise of God because of our emphasis on "perfection," not seeing that their own praise, offered under greater outward limitations, may after all be the best music.

Heaven help us to learn just enough of the "doctrine of imperfection" to see that it is with imperfect efforts that we serve God, or not at all. And that if our imperfections come when we've done our best, they "tend to the greater glory of God." It is true that Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, "You must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect," and this must be every Christian's perpetual standard. But when the imperfections are there, as they always will be, let us see that they point to the perfect Father, while the contrast keeps us humble and ever moving upward, towards perfection. —*Texas Tech U., Lubbock, Tx.*

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Pilgrimage of Joy . . .

MARRIED AND BROKE!

By Carl Ketcherside

By the time my thirteenth birthday arrived and summer vacation had rolled around I was scheduled for meetings in three states. This meant I would be away from home until school started again. I had already baptized several persons, most of them my age. A number of others who had “come forward” were immersed by elders who were afraid that, because of my size. I might drown them in the process, or vice versa. At least two of the meetings were in tents. This was before the time of amplifiers and loud-speakers so I had to develop my voice range which was not easy for one my age. Meetings were held all seven nights of the week and often three times on Sunday. There was not much time for respite.

It was not all serious business, and years later, older brethren would recount to my embarrassment, how, when I was preaching in a country schoolhouse or other rural setting, I would be out playing leapfrog or marbles with other boys of my age, and they would have to come out and tell me I had better stop and wash up at the pump because it was time for the meeting to begin. Since many of my engagements were in farming communities or small villages, and I stayed in a different home every night, sleeping under all sorts of conditions and eating all kinds of food, I received training which stood me in good stead later as I traveled in other parts of the world.

It would be interesting to me, but boring to you, if I were to recount the meetings in which I engaged for the next two or three years, so I will resist the urge to pursue that course. There are some places which return vividly to mind. Among them is Bonne Terre, Missouri, which took me back to within six miles of my birthplace. Here, where the remnants of the Cantwell congregation were to be found, I stayed in the home of my paternal grandparents while speaking each night to a capacity crowd. Often the building could not contain the listeners. Seventeen persons were immersed, some of whom still live and are active in the work of the Lord. The spiritual enthusiasm in the town was at a high pitch and the saints were blessed.

Another place I especially remember was a rural congregation called Walnut Hill, south of Springfield, Missouri, located near Battlefield, so designated because of the fierce Civil War battle in which the famous General Nathanael Lyons, of the Union forces, was mortally wounded. It was not historical lore which impressed the place upon my mind, but the fact that the group of saints there purchased for me my first suit with long trousers. When I went in to Springfield with one of the elders, Brother Bussard, he sprang a

complete surprise on me by taking me to a clothing store on South Campbell Street where he outfitted me in a suit with a vest. The price was fifteen dollars and there was no sales tax.

Then, with two more years of high school before me, my father decided to move to Topeka,.Kansas. An elderly gentleman, Peter Griggs, offered him a contract to manage Mount Auburn Cemetery, and he found the lure of a regular income irresistible. He called me by long distance telephone and I went to Topeka where I met him and exhausted my little bank account by making a down payment on an old house outside the city limits which I thought of as “that tumble-down shack in Athlone.” It had no indoor plumbing and was in a state of decrepitude. It was all we could afford. When my mother saw it she said, “Poor people have poor ways,” and set about trying to make it livable. My father had great plans for developing it when we got on our feet. We never got there and the “dream castle” never emerged. He spent every spare minute preaching and settling squabbles at places which did not reimburse him enough to pay the grocery bill.

When I started to Highland Park High School I was in a different world than I had been in while attending the little two-teacher high school in Pearl, Illinois. But there was no speech department and when I took it upon myself to enroll in the National Oratorical Contest I had to do all of the work on the speech myself. In the elimination contest I was obviously at a disadvantage and did not even win an alternate position. First place was captured by Geroge Chumos of Topeka High School, the fluent son of a Greek immigrant. When I learned that he had been coached by Miss Carmi Wolfe, head of the Speech Department, I enrolled in Topeka High School where I had to pay my own tuition.

The following year under the expert tutelage of Miss Wolfe, I captured the city contest, the state contest, the regional contest, and lost out in the one which would have sent me to Washington to compete in the finals, held in the House of Representatives. When I graduated from high school I went to Topeka Business College on a scholarship. I studied banking and accounting and ended up taking a position with the Columbian Title and Trust Company, as a researcher for abstracts. I spent my noon hours poring over the old Indian treaties and government land grants. But after less than six months had passed, the call of the whitened fields became so great, I could not resist. I resigned my position, much against the will of the company officials and returned to traveling as an evangelist.

God was gracious unto me and my efforts were crowned with what “our brotherhood” regarded as success. There were “additions” in every meeting. New congregations were being started and when divisions occurred, as they frequently did, we were able to consolidate “the faithful ones” who “came out from among them” to preserve the doctrine in its purity.

I was nineteen years old when I went back to Flat River, Missouri, for what turned out to be one of the most eventful meetings of my life. Every evening when the bell sent its mellow tones out across this mining town the people began to surge toward the building. It was literally “standing room only” every night. I stayed with an uncle in Bonne Terre, about seven miles away but I was in Flat River daily, visiting the members and doing personal work. My song leader was Arvel Watts, one of the best I had ever known, but the greatest thing going for him, as I soon discovered, was that he was the older brother of Nellie Watts. I had always liked girls, and even at my tender age had imagined I was in love with a number of them. But that was before I saw Nell, a raven-haired brown-eyed beauty, whose simple charm swept me off my feet and left my mind reeling.

J. W. Watts, whose first initials stood for John Wesley, was reared in a home of “shouting Methodists,” as was his wife. But when he heard Daniel Sommer preach he was baptized into Christ at once and was already a member at Flat River when my father obeyed the gospel. By the time I grew up and returned to Flat River for the meeting, he and Arvel each owned a store, and Nell was working as a clerk in her father’s place of business. There were six children in the Watts family, as there were in my own father’s family, and the home was one of genuine Christian commitment, under the direction of a stern but just father whose word was law, and who tolerated no “monkey business.”

It was Nell’s mother, I think, who first suspicioned that I was ending up at the store every day just before noon, not so much because I was interested in food, but to see her daughter. When she mentioned her feelings to Nell’s father he said it was silly, and that in spite of the fact I wasn’t yet dry behind the ears, I had too much sense to marry at my age. Meanwhile I could see no indication that I was making any headway, and the meeting was fast drawing to a conclusion. One of Nell’s sisters did not help my state of depression by informing me that Nell had long ago announced that she would never marry a preacher or traveling salesman.

It was on the final afternoon of the meeting that Nell's older sister and her fiance suggested that they would take me back to Bonne Terre after the meeting. He was the local Oldsmobile dealer and drove a new coupe with a rumble seat. As Nell and I rode along in it I extracted from her a promise that she would write to me if I wrote to her. She said she would answer any letters she received. That's where she made her mistake.

I wrote every day. Some days I wrote twice. Four more months went by and I found a few days in which I would not be preaching. I arranged a date in advance and during those few days we agreed that we would marry. I do not think I ever made a formal proposal. We simply seemed to take it for granted that we would marry. I went on my way rejoicing but now sent every cent I could spare to Nell who placed it in a special account so that we could purchase a car and later our furniture. A few months later I returned so we could make final arrangements. I had been writing every day and printing a little sixteen page quarterly dedicated just to her, but now the days seemed to creep by.

Finally, the time came to get the license and make the final preparations, and on Sunday afternoon, we were married in the living-room of the Watts' home, with my uncle, L.E. Ketcherside, officiating. It was a very simple ceremony, lasting but a few minutes. There were no special decorations. We left immediately enroute to Topeka, Kansas, where my folk lived. On the way we stopped overnight at Nevada, Missouri, where we had resolved to make our home.

After a few days in Topeka, we started for California, where I was scheduled for three meetings. There were no motels and most of the roads were unpaved. We expected to camp along the way and had a tent and all of the equipment with us. But the second night out, at North Platte, Nebraska, I became violently ill and developed a high fever. The next morning I drove as far as the little town of Sutherland, a distance of twenty miles, and it became apparent I could go no farther. We drove down the dusty main street until we saw the sign on a dingy little building, "Frank Shambaugh, M.D., Physician and Surgeon." Dr. Shambaugh examined me and diagnosed my condition as appendicitis. He suggested that we get a room in the little unprepossessing two-story hotel, and he would pack me in ice in the hope that the inflammation would subside and I could return home for surgery.

After seven days in the little hotel room it was obvious there was no improvement and something would have to be done at once. In a private home converted into a three-room hospital I underwent surgery on Sunday afternoon. I was frightfully nauseated from the ether. Each morning Nell came to remain with me through the day. Each evening she went back to the hotel room by herself. When I became able to drive we took a test run out

through the country and the next day started for Topeka. We were financially broke. Our last cent was gone. We were in debt and I was too weak to work. But we were both alive and we were together.

A short time later we rented our first place, a little three-room meagerly furnished apartment in an old house at Nevada, Missouri. Here the members took us to their hearts and we found real joy in sharing our lives together. The congregation continued their plan of mutual ministry, for they had never hired a preacher. The elders and other brethren of ability edified the saints. I simply took my turn with them, but it was not necessary that I be present on Sunday. I was free to go out and take the message to others.

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CAN ONE HAVE THE HOLY SPIRIT AND NOT REALIZE IT?

This is true of other things in life. A man might be rich without realizing it. He might have family that he does not know about. He may well have powers and abilities within him that he does not realize he has. And it is often the case in a negative way: one may have debts that he doesn't know about, and many are there who have or have had cancer without realizing that dreaded disease had long been with them. There does not seem to be a *necessary* connection between a reality in one's life and an awareness of that reality. God may be working in our lives in unnumbered ways that we do not know about. If only those blessings were ours that we are aware of in a definite way, we would surely have fewer blessings. It could be argued that it is better for us to be aware of the things God is doing in our lives, especially in reference to the mission of the Holy Spirit, but that doesn't mean that we always are.

It is to the point that the apostle should ask the Corinthians "Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you?" (2 Cor. 13:5) This is to say that Jesus might well be within one without that person having an adequate grasp of the reality. And this is how Jesus dwells within, through his Holy Spirit. Paul is even more direct in 1 Cor. 6:19: "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God?" This suggests that they did not know, or at least that their grasp was very shallow. The Corinthians seemed to have had the Spirit without realizing it.

The language in Gal. 3 is similar: "Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh?" They had obviously become confused, even to

the point of foolish behavior. But this did not change the reality of what God had given them. They began in the Spirit whether they realized it or not, and they had received the Spirit, however vague this was to them at Paul's writing.

If a woman can be pregnant with child without realizing it, she may be filled with the Holy Spirit without realizing it. We all know love, joy and peace when we see them, but we may not realize, and the person who manifests such graces, may not realize that they are the fruit of the Spirit. The Spirit may be with and within the believer, ministering to him and through him in all sorts of ways, without his being aware of the source of the power. The Spirit may be praying for us to the Father when we are completely unaware of it, as per the promise of Rom. 8:26.

On the other hand, the Spirit may be hindered in his ministry in us through our failure to realize and appreciate his presence. It is noteworthy that Paul would say "Be filled with the Spirit" to people who had already received the Spirit when they accepted Christ (Eph. 1:13,5:18). To tell people to be filled with a reality that they already have may be something like telling a man to appropriate the fortune he has inherited, which he does not seem to realize he has. The apostle complains to the Corinthians: "Do you not know that you are God's temple, and that God's Spirit dwells in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16), which shows that their problems may have stemmed from their failure to realize who and what they were. But they were Christ's Body and they did have the Spirit dwelling within them, whether they realized it or not.

I recently heard a brother tell a congregation of his experience of being "baptized with the Holy Spirit," as he put it. At the time he was so "baptized" he had been a Christian for many years. He kept referring to that dramatic moment as the time he received the Spirit, and he testified to the peace and joy that this had brought into his life. He is now kinder and more loving, he said, a better husband and a better person, and he now has the conviction that Christ lives in him. All this is impressive, and we all rejoice when a brother like that finds a closer walk with the Lord. There is no way to argue against a changed life.

As we drove home, I told Ouida that I see no reason for calling his experience the "baptism of the Holy Spirit." After all, that is not a scriptural term and it may be a misleading concept. Why not just say that this brother came to realize what had been his all the time? That is glorious enough, without elevating it and isolating it to the place where it becomes something special, something for only a few of God's children. The apostles nowhere enjoin the believers to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Nowhere is it implied in scripture that one becomes a Christian, and then some years later he is to have a

"baptism" experience and receive the Spirit. To the contrary, the apostles recognize that believers *already* have the Spirit. Acts 2:38 makes it clear that they receive the Spirit as a gift at the time they believe and obey Christ. But now and again the apostles urge the believers to realize what God has given them and to use it for their strength and His glory.

To talk about being "baptized in the Spirit" and the joy and peace that this brings can be both confusing and discouraging to others. It sounds like something special, something that came to this person but to few if any others. The rest of the congregation is left to wonder why God singled him out of all the rest. He got "baptized" through special prayers or by the laying on of hands, but even so it may or may not come, and so the joy and peace that he speaks of comes only through a special act on the part of God. I simply do not believe this, and I am certain that it is contrary to the scriptures.

Joy and peace are the *fruit* of the indwelling Spirit, which is for all believers, not the result of a "baptism" which is for a special few. Paul told the Galatians that God had given them the Spirit "because you are sons" (4:6). In 5:5 he tells them that the Spirit gives them hope. In 5:16 he urges them to walk by that Spirit, and goes on to list love, joy and peace as fruit of the Spirit. He says not one word about their being baptized in the Spirit. They received the Spirit when they became believers ("Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law, or by hearing with faith? see 3:2-3) They *all* had the Spirit because they were all in Christ; they were *all* to bear the fruit of love, joy and peace. If joy was to come some other way, through some special "baptism," that would have been a good place for Paul to have said so.

So, here is what I think our brother was really saying: "All these years I have had a heavenly Guest living within me and didn't realize it. Like a man living atop a gold mine, I have lived in poverty while being rich. Recently the Lord caused me to realize what he has done for me. So now I do not live by my own strength or by law-keeping, but by his love and grace through his indwelling Spirit. The Lord gave me all this when I turned to him in faith and obedience many years ago. But legalism and self-sufficiency quenched the Spirit. Now I realize what he has done for me and how much more he can do for me. Now I have a joy that I never realized to be possible. I am a better man and a better husband and father because of it. I am walking by that Spirit and rejoicing in the harvest he has in my life."

That fits the scriptures, and that would be encouraging to a congregation, for all could relate to it, recognizing that they too might have resources of strength that they have not known about. But to talk of this in terms of a special "baptism" only causes saints to wonder why they have been left out. That is the glory of it. None of us has been left out.

With faith and baptism comes not only the remission of sins but God's Spirit as a gift. And that Spirit is within us to minister to us and through us, to "help" us, as Paul puts it. He is in *all* of us, whether we realize it or not. It is obviously better that we realize it and appropriate the blessings. Once this realization comes, a brother may be misled to call it "the baptism of the Holy Spirit," and I am not going to fall out with him over the terminology, even though I disagree. Once the truth of the indwelling Spirit transforms his life, let him say in the language of Eph. 5:18, "I have been filled with the Spirit," which is to say that, like the Ephesians, he has become inebriated with what has been his all along without realizing it. That will make it clear that we can all have the same awakening and the same blessings, without going to Grace Temple or somewhere so that some "Spirit-filled" preacher can lay hands on us. Like the Ephesians, we can all be "Spirit-filled" by "hearing the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believing In him, you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit." —*Ed.*

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OFFICE NOTES

Our subscription rate is now 3.00 per year or 5.00 for three years. We encourage you to subscribe for two years or more at a time. In clubs of five or more the rate is only 1.50 per name per year. You send us the list of names and we will mail them the paper each month. If you want a bundle sent to you, the rate is 20 cents per copy per month.

We believe you will appreciate the changes in our next issue, which will begin our 19th volume of *Restoration Review.* It will be four pages longer, along with a few other changes.

The bound volume for 1975-76 (two years in one) will be ready in a few weeks. If you have ordered this, it will be sent to you, invoice enclosed (the price is not yet certain). If you want your name on the list to receive one and have not yet sent us your name, we urge you to do this at once.

We continue to sell the magnificent two-volume edition of *Millennial Harbinger,* about 1200 pages in all, which preserves some of the very best writings of Alexander Campbell, in easy-to-read type, which isn't true of the unabridged set. The price is now 13.50 (including postage) but it is easily worth twice that. We cannot promise that this will stay in print.

Hereafter: What Happens after Death? by David Winter is as delightfully exciting as it is scriptural. You will be edified or your money back! Ken Taylor, who did the *Living Bible*, says this little volume can radically change your life. Only 1.50.

We would like to make a John Stott fan of you, for he can only do you good, a tremendously resourceful writer. Our favorite is his *Christ the Controversialist,* which makes Jesus' confrontation with the Pharisees and Sadducees really come alive. 4.20. Other of his titles that we can supply: *Basic Christianity* at 1.75, *The Baptism Fullness of the Holy Spirit,* 1.50, *Men Made New* (on Ro. 5-8) at 1.75, and *Guard the Gospel* (on 2 Tim.) at 2.20.

K. C. Moser's *The Way of Salvation* is getting back on the best seller list after almost 40 years. We are fortunate to still have it in print. After all these years a church that would not listen to what he was saying about grace is now listening. 3.75.

For 1.75 we will send you an attractive volume (with a picture of the old patriarch on the cover) containing Thomas Campbell's *Declaration and Address* in full. It also has, in full, *The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery.* If you are of this heritage, it is almost a sin not to have read these two most famous documents in Campbellite history. Here is a copy of your own to read and mark with profit.

Speaking of Father Campbell, as he was affectionately called, in my research I have come upon an interesting letter by Robert Milligan to Alex Campbell, about the latter's father. He told of how Thomas ordained him to the ministry in 1844 (Did you know our folk did things like that back in the first generation?). He also told the son that his father, more than any man he knew, loved the things of heaven the most and the things of earth the least. That alone should make a man worth reading.

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